



This is part of chapter 1, from “Marley & ME”, entitled “And Puppy Makes Three”. Read it and then fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

We were young. We were in love. We _____ (rollick) in those sublime early days of marriage when life _____ (seem) about as good as life can get. We _____ (can/not) leave well enough alone.

And so on a January evening in 1991, my wife of fifteen months and I _____ (eat) a quick dinner together and _____ (head off) to answer a classified ad in the *Palm Beach Post*.

Why we _____ (do) this, I _____ (be/not) quite sure. A few weeks earlier I _____ (awake) just after dawn to find the bed beside me empty. I _____ (get up) and found Jenny _____ (sit) in her bathrobe at the glass table on the screened porch of our little bungalow, _____ (bend over) the newspaper with a pen in her hand.

There was nothing unusual about the scene. (...) We were a two-newspaper-career couple. (...) We _____ (begin) every morning poring over the newspapers, _____ (see) how our stories _____ (play) and how they stacked up to the competition. We circled, underlined, and clipped with abandon.

But on this morning, Jenny’s nose _____ (be/not) in the news pages but in the classified section. When I _____ (step) closer, I _____ (see) she _____ (circle/feverishly) beneath the heading “Pets—Dogs.”

“Uh,” I _____ (say) in that new-husband, still-treading-gently voice. “Is there something I should know?” She _____ (answer/not). (...) I looked more closely at the newspaper in front of her and saw that one ad in particular seemed _____ (catch) her fancy. She _____ (draw) three fat red stars beside it. It _____ (read): “Lab puppies, yellow. AKC purebred. All shots. Parents on premises.”

“You know,” she said, looking up. “I _____ (try) so hard and look what happened. I can’t even _____ (keep) a stupid houseplant alive. I mean, how hard is that? All you need _____ (do) is water the damn thing.”

Then she _____ (get) to the real issue: “If I can’t even keep a plant alive, how am I ever going to keep a baby alive?” She looked like she _____ (may start) crying.

The Baby Thing, as I called it, _____ (become) a constant in Jenny’s life and _____ (get) bigger by the day. (...) years passed. We _____ (begin/barely) dating when various job opportunities pulled us in different directions across the eastern United States. At first we were one hour’s drive apart. Then we were three hours apart. Then eight, then twenty-four. By the time we both ended together in South Florida and _____ (tie) the knot, she was nearly thirty. Her friends _____ (have) babies. Her body _____ (send) her strange messages.

I leaned over her from behind, _____ (wrap) my arms around her shoulders, and kissed the top of her head. “It’s okay,” I said. But I had to admit, she raised a good question. Neither of us _____ (nurture/ever/really) a thing in our lives. Sure, we _____ (have) pets growing up, but they _____ (count/not/really). We always knew our parents _____ (keep) them alive and well. We both knew we wanted to one day have children, but _____ (be) either of us really up for the job? Children _____ (be) so . . . so . . . scary. They _____ (be) helpless and fragile and looked like they _____ (break) easily if dropped.

A little smile _____ (break out) on Jenny’s face. “I _____ (think) maybe a dog _____ (be) good practice,” she said.